

Announces Meeting with Southwest and Area Business Leaders in February

Rochester, NY – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today said that the decision by Southwest Airlines to maintain AirTran operations at the Rochester is a victory for Rochester area business and leisure passengers.

Slaughter has met with officials at Southwest, the U.S. Department of Transportation and Rochester business leaders to ensure that low-cost carriers like Southwest-owned AirTran would not only retain but increase their presence at the Rochester Airport understanding that their effect on reliable and affordable air travel is industry-wide. Their presence is a positive economic development for the entire Rochester community.

For months, Slaughter has been working with officials at Southwest, the U.S. Department of Transportation and Rochester business leaders to ensure that low-cost carriers like Southwest-owned AirTran would retain and increase their presence at the Rochester Airport understanding that their effect on reliable and affordable air travel is industry-wide. Their presence is a positive economic development for the entire Rochester community.

“For decades I have been battling the problem of overpriced airfares in Rochester and across Western New York so I consider today’s announcement that AirTran will continue its service in Rochester a victory for our business and leisure travelers,” said Slaughter. “Low-cost carriers like AirTran drive prices down and make our airport competitive and our workforce mobile.”

“In the coming weeks I will be hosting a meeting, as I have in the past, with my good friend Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood who has agreed to come to Rochester with Deputy Secretary John Porcari to join with officials from Southwest and Rochester’s largest employers,” announced Slaughter. “Together we will continue to make the case that we must do everything possible to improve regional transportation by keeping airfares low and flights reliable.”

Further details on Slaughter’s meeting with Secretary LaHood to follow.

This isn’t the first time Slaughter has brought LaHood together with Rochester business leaders to discuss the need for lower air fares. In April 2010 when LaHood came to Rochester to discuss high-speed rail at the Rochester Amtrak Station, she hosted a summit that morning with the Secretary and area business leaders.

Slaughter has a long history of working to reduce historically expensive airfares to and from Greater Rochester International Airport understanding that reliable and affordable transportation options critical to the world class corporations that call Rochester home.

[In March 2011, Slaughter partnered with US Airways to announce temporary reductions on US Airways flights to and from the airport . In addition, Slaughter has met repeatedly with local](#)

[businesses and representatives of the US Department of Transportation to explore ways to reduce airfares in Western New York.](#)

Upon first

arriving in Congress, Slaughter was instrumental in adding the Rochester Airport to the Federal Aviation Airport List which allowed the airport to receive millions of dollars in needed upgrades at no cost to taxpayers.

In 1999, she convened an Aviation Competition Listening Session with then Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater to hear from local and national leaders on the problems and proposed solutions to high airfares plaguing mid-sized communities such as Rochester. This listening session provides a forum to highlight the significant challenges facing Rochester at that time. Slaughter also led the effort to convince JetBlue that they should serve the Rochester market by providing written commitments from Rochester-based corporations that would rely on their service. She also worked closely with federal transportation officials to ensure JetBlue landing and take-off rights at busy airports in New York and around the country. In 2000, Slaughter welcomed JetBlue to Rochester who's low cost competition saved local travelers over \$12.5 million in its first year of service alone, and ushered in a wave of lower fares from not only new carriers like AirTran, but from legacy carriers as well.